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WP-CLI over SSH: updating and fixing WordPress from the command line

WordPress & CMS

CODE

RLX-INT-KB-5064

VERSION

v2026.10.15

COUNTRY · LANGUAGE

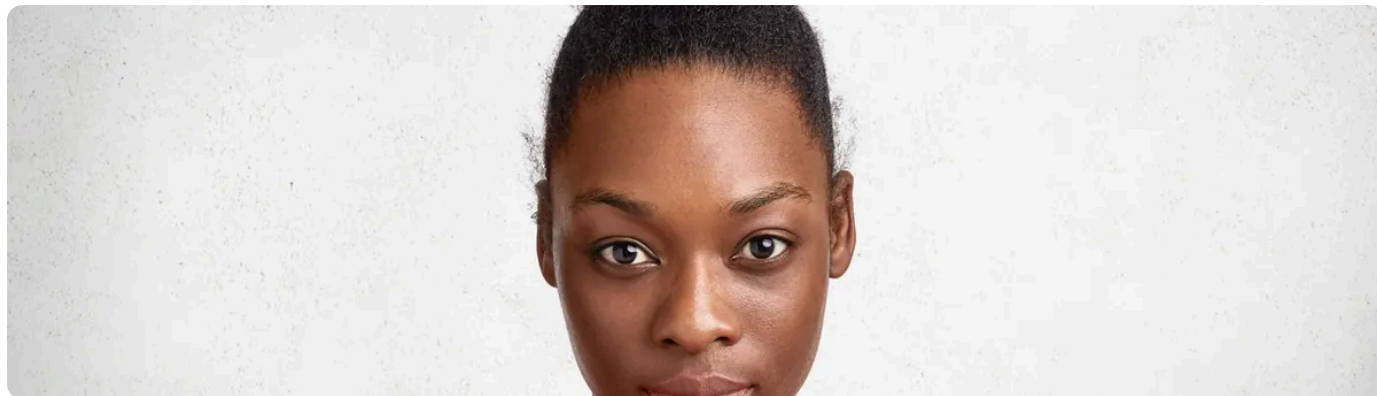
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The short answer: WP-CLI is WordPress on the command line. Instead of opening the dashboard and clicking, you type `wp plugin update --all` and it is done. On our hosting servers the `wp` command is already installed for accounts with SSH access: you do not need to install anything.

We checked on the server: the command exists and is the WP-CLI that ships with the WordPress tool in cPanel (version 2.12.0 when we measured it). You need an account with **SSH or the cPanel Terminal**. Not every account has command-line access: it depends on the account. How to log in is in **SSH access**.

Before the first command

- 1 Take a backup.** These commands change files and the database. What to copy is in **what to back up before updating**. A quick database copy is `wp db export copy.sql`.

- 2 Go to the site folder,** the one containing `wp-config.php`. From any other folder, say where it is with `--path=/path/to/site`.

- 3 Confirm with two commands:** `wp core version` prints the WordPress version and `wp --info` shows, among other things, the PHP the command will use.

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The PHP may not be the one your site uses. WP-CLI uses the account's command-line PHP. To use another one, call it on purpose, for example `/opt/alt/php82/usr/bin/php /usr/local/bin/wp --version`. The case is explained in **the SSH PHP version**.

The commands you will use most

To do this	Command	Note
See whether a new WordPress version exists	<code>wp core check-update</code>	Only shows. Changes nothing.
Update WordPress	<code>wp core update</code>	Back up first. See Updating WordPress .
Check whether WordPress files were altered	<code>wp core verify-checksums</code>	Compares them with the official files. Useful after a security problem.
List plugins, showing the ones with an update	<code>wp plugin list --update=available</code>	Without the option it lists all of them.
Update every plugin	<code>wp plugin update --all</code>	If a plugin breaks the site, the next command helps.
Deactivate a plugin without the dashboard	<code>wp plugin deactivate plugin-name</code>	The name is the "name" column of <code>wp plugin list</code> . See Disabling plugins .
Swap an address across the whole database	<code>wp search-replace 'https://old' 'https://new' --dry-run</code>	With --dry-run it only shows what would change. Repeat without it to apply. See Moving WordPress to a new domain .
Rebuild the permanent links	<code>wp rewrite flush</code>	When pages return 404 after a change.
Run overdue scheduled tasks	<code>wp cron event run --due-now</code>	See Swapping WP-Cron for a real cron job .

Never type a password on the command line. Whatever you type stays in the shell history. To reset a user's password use the WordPress recovery e-mail or the WordPress dashboard.

Look before you act: `--dry-run` wherever it exists, and `wp plugin list --update=available` before `wp plugin update --all`. If you prefer a screen, the WordPress tool in cPanel does the same: **The WordPress tool in cPanel**.

WP-CLI is third-party software and the commands are yours. If one goes wrong, the way back is restoring the backup. How far our support goes is in **How far our support goes**.

A command returned an error you do not understand? Open a ticket with the command and the full reply.

[Open a support ticket](#)

SEE ALSO

[SSH access on your hosting account](#)

[The WordPress tool in cPanel](#)

[What to back up before you update WordPress, plugins or PHP](#)

[Disabling plugins, including when you cannot get in](#)



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